

## Public Sector News

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### More open data...

In the last issue of *Elucidate* the move to open data with the launch of data.gov.uk and londondata.gov.uk was covered, and this continues with the release this month of the promised free mapping from Ordnance Survey. A range of Ordnance Survey data is to be free from 1 April 2010.

My interpretation of what is freely available in 'Ordnance Survey Free', which is a package of products free at the point of use, without restrictions on re-use, is:

- OS Street View (a 1:10 000 scale raster product)
- OS VectorMap District
- 1:50 000 Scale Gazetteer
- 1:250 000 Scale Colour Raster
- Miniscale (a 1:1,000,000 scale raster product)
- Code-Point Open provides accurate
- locations for 1.7 million postcodes in England, Scotland and Wales.
- Boundary-Line
- Meridian2
- Strategi

The public sector has been promised a centrally-funded Public Sector Mapping Agreement by 1 April 2011. This would make Ordnance Survey products, including high specification OS MasterMap, free at the point of use for public-sector bodies, and subject to no limits on re-use when used internally within the public sector for public sector activities. This would cover all the definitive national datasets that the public sector needs to provide vital and valuable services to the public.

You can read the government's response to the consultation at:

[www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1528263.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1528263.pdf)

The Audit Commission have added their voice to the debate about releasing data, and is encouraging discussion about what information the public might be attracted to use. However, it expresses concern about whether or not the data can be trusted; but perhaps putting it out in the public domain will be a way of having it challenged, corrected and refined. [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/thetruthisoutthere/pages/default.aspx](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/nationalstudies/localgov/thetruthisoutthere/pages/default.aspx)

## Progress on Transformational Government

It is reported that Directgov, the government's flagship site and focus for citizen information, is now receiving 20 million hits a month. The development of the site is linked to a planned closure of other government websites under the *Transformational Government* initiative. It is anticipated that the work of closing down sites will be 95% complete by the end of the year.

## Local Government websites

Sadly for those of us working in local government, research by Webcredible has identified websites in this sector as the most difficult to use. This is largely about navigation. This statistic must improve, as figures from Lightspeed Research show that 86% of the people surveyed had used the Internet to access local council or government information, and 91% thought that extending the information and services available on the Web was a good use of public funds. Certainly as budgets tighten in the public sector, more dependence will be placed on Web technologies to deliver the information and access to services that local authorities must make available to their citizens.

One authority (my own!) Warwickshire County Council is confident it is the first authority to launch an iPhone app of its website. It can be downloaded from [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/iphone](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/iphone).

*Public Sector News is supplied by ALGIS in LARIA (The Affiliation of Local Government Information Specialists in Local Authority Research and Intelligence Association) which represents information professionals providing information services to local authority staff and elected members. Jane Inman is currently Chair of ALGIS. ALGIS welcomes anyone with an interest in public sector information who feels they would benefit from being part of a community working in the same area. For more information go to [www.algis.org.uk](http://www.algis.org.uk)*